

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An imaging apparatus, comprising:

a photoreceptor element having an output line, the photoreceptor element sending an electric-signal level to the output line in accordance with an intensity of light received by the photoreceptor element, the electric-signal level attenuating from an initial electric-signal level;

a comparator coupled with the output line of the photoreceptor element, the comparator comparing the electric-signal level from the output line with a threshold electric-signal level, and sending an output signal when the electric-signal level is lower than the threshold electric-signal level; and

a storage unit coupled with the comparator, the storage unit receiving a clock signal and recording a first time period for generating the output signal in the comparator;

wherein the threshold electric-signal level monotonically increases from an initial threshold electric-signal level to a final threshold electric-signal level when the electric signal level attenuates, the initial threshold electric-signal level being lower than the electric-signal level and the final threshold electric-signal level approaching the initial electric-signal level.

2. (Previously Presented) An imaging apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the photoreceptor element is set to an initial-setting electric-signal level by an initialize signal and the electric-signal level on the output line is lowered in accordance with the intensity of light received, wherein the comparator outputs the output signal when the electric-signal level on the output line is lower than or equal to the threshold electric-signal level.
3. (Previously Presented) An imaging apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a calculation unit coupled with the storage unit, wherein the calculation unit calculates an optical energy value received by the photoreceptor element per unit time and calculates a pixel value based on the optical energy value.
4. (Previously Presented) An imaging apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the comparator compares an amplified electric-signal level of the electric-signal level on the output line with the threshold electric-signal level.
5. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus comprising:
  - a photoreceptor element that changes an electric-signal level on an output line thereof in accordance with an intensity of light received;
  - comparing means for comparing the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element with a threshold electric-signal level, and sending an output signal on condition that the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element has crossed the threshold electric-signal level;

storage means, to which a clock signal is input, for recording information regarding a time of generation of the output signal from the comparing means; and

reset-signal input means for inputting a reset signal to the photoreceptor element based on the output signal from the comparing means to reset the electric-signal level on the output line to the initial-setting electric-signal level.

6. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the storage means repeatedly records time information and the reset-signal input means repeatedly inputs a reset signal to the photoreceptor element, and wherein the storage means successively records time information regarding times of generation of a plurality of output signals generated intermittently from the comparing means.

7. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a calculation unit, wherein the storage means successively records sets of time information regarding times taken for the electric-signal level on the output line to be lowered by an exposure of the photoreceptor element from an initial-setting electric-signal level until crossing the threshold electric-signal level, and wherein the calculation unit receives input of two successive sets of time information recorded in the storage means, calculates a value of optical energy received by the photoreceptor element per unit time according to a formula  $(V_{init} - V_{th}) / (T_x - T_y)$  where  $V_{init}$  denotes the initial-setting electric-signal level,  $V_{th}$  denotes the threshold electric-signal level, and  $T_x$  and  $T_y$  denote the two successive sets of time information, respectively, and calculates a pixel value based on the value of optical energy received.

8. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the threshold electric-signal level changes as time elapses.
9. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the comparing means compares an amplified electric-signal level of the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element with the threshold electric-signal level.
10. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus comprising:
  - a photoreceptor element that changes an electric-signal level on an output line thereof in accordance with an intensity of light received;
  - comparing means for comparing the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element with a threshold electric-signal level, and sending an output signal on condition that the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element has crossed the threshold electric-signal level;
  - first storage means, to which a clock signal is input, for recording information regarding a time of generation of the output signal from the comparing means; and
  - second storage means for successively recording the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element and holding an electric-signal level recorded at the time of generation of the output signal from the comparing means.
11. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising reset-signal input means for inputting a reset signal to the photoreceptor element based

on the output signal from the comparing means to reset the electric-signal level on the output line to the initial-setting electric-signal level.

12. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the first storage means repeatedly records time information, the second storage means repeatedly records an electric-signal level, and the reset-signal input means repeatedly inputs a reset signal to the photoreceptor element, wherein the first storage means successively stores time information regarding respective times of generation of a plurality of output signals generated intermittently from the comparing means, and wherein the second storage means holds individual electric-signal levels recorded at the respective times of generation of the plurality of output signals intermittently generated from the comparing means.

13. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a calculation unit, wherein the first storage means successively records sets of time information regarding times taken for the electric-signal level on the output line to be lowered by an exposure of the photoreceptor element from an initial-setting electric-signal level until crossing the threshold electric-signal level, and wherein the calculation unit receives input of two successive sets of time information recorded in the first storage means, and input of an electric-signal level associated with one of the two successive sets of time information, recorded in the second storage means, calculates a value of optical energy received by the photoreceptor element per unit time according to a formula  $(V_{init} - V_x) / (T_x - T_y)$  where  $V_{init}$  denotes the initial-setting electric-signal

level,  $V_x$  denotes the electric-signal level associated with the one of the two successive sets of time information, and  $T_x$  and  $T_y$  denote the one and the other of the two successive sets of time information, respectively, and calculates a pixel value based on the value of optical energy received.

14. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the threshold electric-signal level changes as time elapses.

15. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the second storage means is an analog memory for storing an analog value, and stores the electric-signal level on the output line as an analog value.

16. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the second storage means has a plurality of data recording regions, and holds individual electric-signal levels recorded at the respective times of generation of the plurality of output signals intermittently generated from the comparing means.

17. (Withdrawn) An imaging apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the comparing means compares an amplified electric-signal level of the electric-signal level on the output line of the photoreceptor element with the threshold electric-signal level.

18. (Previously Presented) An imaging apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the storage unit records a second time period corresponding to changing of the electric-

signal level from an initial-setting electric-signal level to the threshold electric-signal level, and sends the second time period to the calculation unit.

19. (Previously Presented) An image apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the optical energy value per unit time is calculated using a formula  $(V_{init} - V_{th}(t)) / T_n$ , where  $V_{init}$  denotes the initial-setting electric-signal level,  $V_{th}(t)$  denotes the threshold electric-signal level, and  $T_n$  denotes the second time period.